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DEFENSE ISSUES

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NATO's challenges include Bosnia and the latest confrontation with Iraq. These demands, combined with assimilating three new members, will require ongoing efforts to ensure NATO's continuing effectiveness and success.

Volume 13 Number 17

NATO at 50: New Challenges in a New Age

Remarks as delivered by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Munich, Germany, Feb. 8, 1998.

Thank you very much ...

Some years ago, Marx had declared that humans are the flotsam on the currents of history. And I thought about this particular quote because of what [then-President Harry S.] Truman said in response. Harry Truman, who led us successfully to the end of the Second World War, said that it was individuals who make history and not the other way around, and that progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

That statement comes to mind as I am sitting next to one of the most unique individuals in my experience, and I suggest, of all of those who are here. That, of course, is Ewald von Kleist [founder of the Wehrkunde Conference]. We are going to miss his steady and sturdy presence. He has run this conference, well, with not quite an iron fist all the time, because many times he has asked that you be brief or we be brief, and we've managed to carry on for 10 or 15 minutes before he rings his bell, but he has indeed been an inspirational leader for me and, I believe, for all of us who are here.

I also thought about it because of the quote from Truman, because I think Truman would have been astonished to see the results of the Euro-Atlantic Alliance and what has been achieved in such a very brief period of time and the contribution that so many of the individuals who are here in this room have made.

I can recall when I first came, some 20 years ago. I still see many of the same people here. I see a lot of new faces as well, but it is extraordinary what the individuals who are here today have made in the way of a contribution to securing the peace and stability of the NATO countries and promoting peace and prosperity throughout Europe.

Mario Cuomo, who is the former governor of New York, said that we campaign in poetry but we govern in prose. I would like to get a little prosaic here this morning and talk about NATO enlargement in a much more fundamental way in terms of what we think needs to be done. I'll touch upon that, Bosnia and perhaps a few words on Iraq.

NATO enlargement is something that is on our horizon. Certainly there are several parliaments who ... have already scheduled their debate. We have a number of members of the United States Senate who are here, I believe 10, and they will take up the issue of the three new members who are seeking accession to NATO, probably by March or April. You heard Sen. [John] McCain and Sen. [John W.] Warner and others speak yesterday about the cost factors.

The United States Senate will be looking at what does it cost for the enlargement of NATO, primarily because there is some apprehension, if not skepticism, that the costs involved will ultimately be borne by the American taxpayer. It is a fear that has surfaced in recent debates. It is one we have to address.

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Last year I submitted to the United States Congress an estimate of what it would cost to enlarge NATO. At the time, you'll be interested to learn, those in Congress felt that the numbers that I was talking about were exceedingly low. At the time, I was projecting that the total cost for the new members, for NATO, non-U.S. NATO members and the United States itself, the total costs would be something in the neighborhood of \$27 [billion] to \$35 billion over a 13-year period.

We had another study conducted by the Rand Corp.; it said it would be closer to \$43 [billion] or \$44 billion. The Congressional Budget Office said, no, it was really going to be \$120 billion.

You would be interested to know that most members of Congress, when I mentioned \$27 [billion] to \$35 billion for a total cost, thought I was underestimating the costs and they said that you have deliberately lowered the cost in order to gain our approval for these new members. Of course, there were members in Europe who said, "My God, what are you talking about? It doesn't cost that much to enlarge NATO, you are really exaggerating the costs for NATO enlargement so that all of your weapons manufacturers can sell their expensive high-tech equipment to these new emerging nations."

Since that time, we have Gen. [Wesley K.] Clark, SACEUR [supreme allied commander, Europe], who is here, and others who have been busy, Klaus Naumann [chairman of the NATO Military Committee] and others, who have worked with the NATO military committee to come up with accurate figures in terms of what NATO enlargement is going to cost. Then it comes to just that portion or that common fund for NATO, the figures that have at least been presented to me in a preliminary basis are somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.5 billion. Members of Congress are saying, "Wait a minute, last year you were talking about 35 for the totality of the costs and when you look at the common-funded requirements, you were looking at \$5.6 [billion] to \$7 billion and now you are coming up with [\$]1.5.

There is a reason for this, and it will take some explanation -- but the reason, of course, is the initial estimate was four countries coming in. I know that our Italian friends were hoping for Slovenia. Our French friends were hoping for Romania and others perhaps had other countries in mind. We have three countries that, ultimately, NATO decided to recommend for accession. That accounts for some of the discrepancy.

The other part is that we found that many of the facilities that would be required to be upgraded were in very good shape. The Poles, Czechs, Hungarians really had very good facilities that they could build upon and that the Czech Republic, by way of example, had even gone forward to engage in the digitalization of their military, their army. So they anticipated NATO membership.

So there has been some reduction in the costs but, nonetheless, we have to keep this very much in mind because there is still great skepticism that this is now going to be a very expensive proposition for the United States and that other countries will expect the United States to pick up the large bulk of these costs, that it will be a mistake, that it should not take place.

Those countries who are coming in, the three that I mentioned, must make every effort to upgrade their command and control and communications, their intelligence infrastructure. They must upgrade their logistical capabilities. They must make those investments in order to be able to carry out their Article 5 requirements.

Secondly, the NATO members -- again non-U.S. -- in this particular case, have to modernize their own militaries. Even as they downsize and reshape their military to make it as relevant to the 21st century as possible, knowing in advance that we are going to face different types of threats -- asymmetrical threats, that these costs have to be undertaken by the existing NATO members to reform their militaries and to upgrade their force projection capabilities as was pledged back in 1991. Of course, we also have to make sure that those common funds indeed are replenished with the dollars required.

Another point we have to keep in mind is to keep the door open. This has been talked about. [German] Chancellor [Helmut] Kohl was asked to address this issue yesterday. The door to new members must always be open. We decided this past year that three new members would come in, but that would not be the end -- that those countries which are capable of reforming their economic systems, their social

structure, their political systems and their militaries, who seek admission to NATO should not be foreclosed. Certainly not by any geographical factors.

We also want to enhance the Partnership for Peace Program. I must tell you when this was initially formulated, I was a great skeptic. I did not put much faith in the Partnership for Peace Program. Since that time, I've become a great believer. I have attended a number of functions this past year and I have seen so many nations who are eager to rush to embrace the doctrine, the training, the ideas, of the NATO countries. This is something that we should encourage and not discourage, and so we are looking forward to greater emphasis placed upon the Partnership for Peace programs to promote our ideas that we talked about yesterday -- our ideas of freedom, opportunity and prosperity.

Another major goal must be, as Secretary General [Javier] Solana has indicated, to really improve upon and build upon the relationship we have with Russia and Ukraine. We have a NATO-Russia Charter and it is really quite remarkable when you think about it, that we have replaced the mutually assured destruction doctrine that was so preoccupying all of us back in the '60s, '70s, '80s -- and now we have cooperative threat reduction working with our friends in Russia. We have a NATO-Russia Founding Act. We have a NATO-Ukraine Charter. The missile fields in Ukraine have been replaced with sunflowers. There is a remarkable transformation that has taken. We want to build upon that relationship with Russia as well.

I must tell you that it was an exciting experience for me to visit Bosnia this past year -- past two years -- and to visit with Russian soldiers who were standing side-by-side with NATO soldiers and to see their sense of pride and professionalism. As a matter of fact, if any of you were to visit me in my Washington office, you would find in one of my display cases a blue beret given to me by one of the Russian soldiers who was so excited to be there, committed to promoting peace in that war-torn country.

In Bosnia, I also, like many of the members here today from the Senate and the House, was skeptical. What were we doing getting involved in Bosnia? Why was not this a European obligation? What would be the endgame? How would we ever find an exit?

These were all questions that I was concerned about, as well as Sen. McCain, Sen. Warner, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, Sen. Phil Gramm, and Sen. [Charles S.] Robb. All of them were really questioning whether it was wise and prudent to become involved in a country and an area that had known so many centuries of bloodletting. If the Europeans were fearing to tread where angels fear to go -- why was the United States being called upon to act?

So it was with great skepticism, and some reluctance, that the United States finally became involved. To its credit, it provided a crucial leadership role. I have seen the transformation, there is no one in this room who has not been to Bosnia to see the tremendous difference that NATO has meant to the lives of tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of people in that country.

When I first went to Sarajevo, I too was struck by the fact that it could have been World War II. When I saw the buildings that had been razed and shelled, so much carnage that was apparent, and the slight fear that I felt or experienced as I passed through Sniper's Alley and wondered [if] there was someone up in the hills who might take a shot at me at that particular time as well.

But two years later, we have seen a dramatic transformation in that country. People are going back to work -- as a matter of fact, it probably has one of the most dynamic economies in Europe, and maybe the world today, in terms of its growth prospects. You are seeing farmers going back into the fields. You're seeing roofs going back on buildings, windows being replaced. You are seeing children in the streets -- so there is a tremendous change that has taken place in a very short period of time.

The question is: How long are we going to stay? President Clinton has indicated that the United States is prepared to stay beyond June of 1998, but there are a number of conditions attached to that -- some from President Clinton no doubt, but also from members of Congress who passed legislation last year which set up certain criteria.

The law said that all funding for Bosnia runs out in June of this year unless the president were to certify that it is in America's national interest to remain, how many troops we are going to maintain, for how long, at what cost and what would be the impact on morale and readiness for all of our troops. He must submit a supplemental appropriation request.

All of that has to be measured up to by President Clinton by June of this year. Those are very high standards and Congress is entitled to receive answers to those questions. The president is now working with members, and members are here seeing for themselves why it is in America's interest to remain engaged in Bosnia.

We are hopeful that we can also persuade our European friends that more has to be done -- in terms of either funding or producing manpower for the IPTF [International Police Task Force], the organization that is responsible for training the local police. More needs to be done; there has not been sufficient abundance of money or manpower devoted to that institution.

We need to have a special unit integrated into the command and control structure of SFOR [Stabilization Force] or the follow-on force in order to make sure that we do not see mission-creep. We do not want to see our soldiers used for civilian implementation purposes. It is a misuse of the talent, training and expertise of military men and women to be engaged in civil affairs. So there has to be, we think, a special unit that would be comprised from various countries to help in that effort, again under the command and control of SFOR or the follow-on force.

We also have to have some kind of a time frame. The president has indicated that we are not going to put down deadlines again and I agree with that. We have seen two time deadlines that have been set in the past, and they have proved to be unsuccessful. So, we are looking to set some sort of benchmark, some sort of time frame, some criteria we can measure whereby the United States can, in fact, at some future time, hopefully not in the infinite future, but at some future time, in a reasonably foreseeable period of time, be able to remove our combat forces.

Let me move and talk about Iraq.

Yesterday, we heard some questions raised about why are we concerned about Iraq. Where is the evidence? Let me say to all of our friends who are here, especially our Russian friends: if Saddam Hussein has nothing to hide, he has nothing to fear. He is required by the U.N. resolutions to open his country to the UNSCOM [U.N. Special Commission on Iraq], the U.N. inspectors -- all of his facilities, not just those that he deems are important or relevant to UNSCOM's job.

We have seen in recent days a lot of preoccupation with presidential palaces. I find it ironic that, while his people are going without food, he continues to build monuments to himself. Since the Persian Gulf War, he has constructed more than 40 such palaces which he has declared to be official residences.

I am struck by the differences: We have one White House and one Camp David, more than sufficient for an American president and yet, somehow, Mr. Saddam Hussein believes it is necessary to have 80 palatial residences at the expense of feeding his own people. We should not be mesmerized by preoccupation as to whether UNSCOM will have access to those presidential compounds--one of which, by the way, exceeds the size of the entire city of Washington, D.C. -- so it is not exactly a small home. The UNSCOM inspectors are not seeking to investigate private bedrooms for dirty linen. They are looking for dirty chemicals in vast compounds.

Let us not be too preoccupied with the presidential compounds, even though that is a matter of some discussion today, because he has also declared "off-limits" so-called sensitive sites. Sensitive sites being military installations, sensitive sites being those occupied by Republican Guards.

This, of course, is not acceptable while we are still seeking a diplomatic solution. The diplomatic solution must be an unconditional agreement to allow the inspectors to carry out their duties -- anything less than that only will contribute to the fears and apprehensions about his ability to reconstitute and to build upon those stocks that he currently has, and that we believe he has in his possession. Let me talk

about the proof.

Saddam Hussein and his government have lied consistently in the past. Originally, following the Persian Gulf War, they said they had no chemical weapons and no biological weapons. That proved to be a lie. His son-in-law defected. After his son-in-law's defection, it was revealed that Saddam had vast sums of chemical and biological weapons. Saddam's son-in-law, unfortunately, went back to Baghdad and was murdered almost immediately upon his return. Prior to that, he had talked about where we might look to find these weapons, and then Iraq admitted that they had not a few chemical and biological weapons.

Anthrax is, as you know, a very deadly chemical, biological weapon. One single spore in your lungs and you will die within five days. He has 2,100 gallons of anthrax, that they admitted to [having], to the U.N. inspectors. Proof: They admitted this.

VX, which is a very deadly nerve agent -- a single drop on your finger and you will die within a couple of minutes -- how much did they have? They admitted to having 3.9 tons of VX. They have something called "ricin," which is extracted from castor beans. From castor beans, you can make castor oil but you can also extract a poison -- just six or seven beans would be enough to extract enough poison "ricin", for which there is no antidote, to kill a human being within a very short period of time. They are growing hundreds of acres of castor beans. So for the Iraqis to say, "We have no chemicals or biologicals, we are not engaged in producing these types of weapons of mass destruction," I think once again has proven to be a lie.

Some of the missiles have been weaponized with anthrax. This information came from a defector, the head of his military intelligence service. He defected and went on national television in America, pointing out that a number of the missiles in his possession were weaponized with anthrax. This is the job of UNSCOM to verify. We are not trusting. We are going to verify in terms of whether or not he still has this capability.

We have tried to point out that the United States, the United Nations, really does have more concern for the welfare of the Iraqi people than does Saddam Hussein. We were the ones who proposed Section 986, the so-called "Oil for Food" program, that allowed them to sell oil and yet the revenues must be used to feed his people. He resisted this program. For 18 months, he wouldn't even allow it to go into effect, because he didn't like being constrained in terms; he wanted to use the money to rebuild his military. We are even supporting the U.N. proposal to increase that program. We had no objection to that because we did not want to see the Iraqi people go without food, even though he does.

Once again, diplomacy is the means by which we seek to achieve our goal, but the goal should be very clear. It is compliance with the U.N. resolutions. If members of the United Nations refuse to insist upon compliance for the resolutions that they have passed and endorsed, then what it does is undercut the credibility of United Nations itself. You cannot have a situation where they declare rules [and] regulations and then forgo insistence upon compliance with those regulations without discrediting the institution itself.

This is something I think is very much in the United Nations' interest. I hope that they will rally, as [German] Chancellor [Helmut] Kohl did yesterday, to the support of the United Nations. Great Britain and other countries will now see that this is a threat to the stability of that region and must not be allowed to continue.

What is the endgame? The endgame is to reduce, to curtail, his capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction, to pose a threat to his neighbors. We hope that military action will not be necessary. Military action is not a substitute for UNSCOM inspectors being on the ground, looking inside of buildings, determining where there is reason to believe that they should go.

If I had the time and the opportunity, I would bring a series of charts out to you. One of the charts would be a photograph, taken by an overhead system, that was declassified. It's a very interesting chart. It shows a large facility. This large facility, at one point in time about six months before the photograph was taken, shows a building with absolutely no activity around it. Let me assure you this building was

not a daycare center. It was a facility that was used by the Republican Guards. The UNSCOM inspectors announced they were on their way: They were held up for a period of two hours. The overhead imagery shows what? It shows a series of 17 vans pulling up to that particular facility. Within another 20 minutes, the vans have all been removed. Finally the inspectors were allowed to come in.

I don't know what you would draw from that particular observation, but it is something that lawyers would call the doctrine of "res ipsa loquitur" -- the thing speaks for itself. As Henry Thoreau said, "That's when we found a trout in your milk." It did not breed and generate from the milk, somebody put it there. This doctrine applies to that particular case. We have seen example after example where every time the inspectors have tried to go to a suspect facility, they are barred and delayed until such time as the place can be cleansed of any evidence.

The inspectors have done an outstanding job, as the president has pointed out and also as the United Nations has pointed out. They have been responsible for overseeing the destruction of more chemical and biological weaponry and missiles than were destroyed during the Gulf War itself. They cannot be allowed to be hindered in the fashion they have been. They cannot be told, "You cannot go into this place, you cannot see this particular site," because if we do that, then we are in fact yielding to Saddam Hussein's tactics of deceit and deception.

Mr. Chairman, let me cease here. Let me also say, it's an incredible time to be alive. I know that poets have to measure their lives in coffee spoons and politicians do it in conferences like this. I must tell you, this is perhaps the most important conference I attended during my career in the Senate and, certainly, now attend. It is an opportunity to have the benefit of the insights and the wisdoms and even the constructive criticisms from new people, and I find that it is really not ironic, but really quite telling, that I can be sitting here on this side of the table.

I recall the times that I was debating with [Professor] Egon Bahr [University of Hamburg] -- he's not here right now, but if he were, we would still debate. We talked at one time about the nuclear freeze -- you may recall that the great movement that was under way here in Europe, and all the tensions that existed. I recall debating Mr. Bahr at that time and others. Here we are still sitting in this room. Here we are still debating certain issues. Here we are with Egon Bahr saying to our Russian friends, stop complaining about the Russian Founding Act, the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Just make it work!

It is a remarkable experience that we could have people who are in this room and to think of the transformation that has taken place in the 20th century -- going from the Wright brothers to the Space Station Mir in one century; going from vacuum tubes to microwaves to microchips; from the MAD [mutually assured destruction] Doctrine to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act; from the Berlin Wall to the NATO-Russia Founding Act. These are exciting times to have really been alive, to have made a contribution.

I look around the room, and I see our chairman, Herr von Kleist, and Chancellor Kohl. I look down the line and I see Brent Scowcroft [former U.S. National Security Adviser] and Hal Sonnenfeld [Brookings Institution] and [Professor] Karl Kaiser, whom we listened to yesterday, and John McCain and [German minister of defense] Volker Ruehe, and Richard Perle [former U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy] and Richard Burt [former U.S. ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany].

Then we have new faces: Minister [of Defense Alain] Richard from France, and Minister [of Defense Beniamino] Andreatta from Italy, Alexei Arbatov [member of the Russian parliament] and Sergei Barburin [First Deputy Speaker, Russian parliament]. It is really remarkable what has taken place. This never would have happened 10 years ago -- for us to have this opportunity to listen to their ideas, their challenges and criticisms. What a remarkable contribution this has been to mankind!

So let me close, if I can find the appropriate quote from one of Germany's noted poets: Heinrich von Kleist, the ancestor of the founder of this conference. He once wrote that the highest and only goal in life is to find a truth that remains true until after the grave.

Thanks to 34 years of Baron von Kleist's Wehrkunde Conference and thanks to 49 years of NATO, we

have found such a truth: It is the inextricable link between America's security and Europe's security. That is a truth that lives beyond the graves of millions who perished in Europe's wars: It is a truth that has set us free for the past 50 years and, if observed, will keep us free.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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DEFENSE ISSUES

INDEX